

CLAIMS:

1. A system for combating file piracy via peer-to-peer networks (6000), comprising a plurality of terminal devices (1000a-1000c) each
5 running a client program (1004, 1010) arranged to emulate a peer-to-peer user.
2. A system according to claim 1 in which said client program comprises a screen saver program (1010), arranged to start execution on
10 detecting cessation of activity by computers users of the terminal device.
3. A system according to claim 1 further comprising a server computer (3000) arranged to communication with the terminal devices (1000a-1000c).
15
4. A system according to claim 3 in which the server computer (3000) communicates via the Internet (2000) with the terminal devices (1000).
5. A system according to claim 3 in which the server computer
20 (3000) is arranged to maintain a list (4000) of works to be protected against piracy, and to supply at least part of said list to said terminal devices (1000).

6. A system according to claim 3 in which the server computer (3000) is arranged to receive data from the terminal devices (1000) indicating one or more peer-to-peer users making pirated files available, and/or details of pirated files held by said one or more users.

5

7. A system for discouraging piracy of files over peer-to-peer networks, comprising a terminal device (1000) arranged to emulate a peer-to-peer user, to receive a request to download a pirated file, to commence downloading at a first data rate, and, after a predetermined time, to reduce the data rate to a second data rate lower than said first data rate.

10

8. A system according to claim 7 in which the terminal device (1000) is arranged to receive a request for a segment of a pirated file, comprising only a portion of said file, and to transmit data which does not correspond to said segment so as to corrupt said file.

15

9. A system for combating file piracy via peer-to-peer networks, in which a first terminal device (1000a) is arranged to detect a peer-to-peer user computer offering a pirated file, and at least one terminal device (1000a, 1000b) is arranged to download said file at a data rate lower than the maximum data rate possible.

20

10. The system of claim 9 in which said first terminal device (1000a) is arranged to cause at least one other terminal device (1000b) to request to download said file.

5 11. The system of claim 10 in which said first terminal device (1000a) is arranged to signal to a server computer (3000) the identity of the peer-to-peer user computer and the file, and the server computer (3000) is arranged to signal to at least a second terminal device (1000b) the identity of said peer-to-peer user and file, and said second terminal (1000b) is arranged
10 to request the download of said file from said peer-to-peer user computer.

12. A system according to any preceding claim in which said terminal devices (1000) are arranged to offer files which appear to be pirated files, and to supply said files to peer-to-peer users in the form of data other
15 than said pirated files.

13. A method of reducing piracy of digital files via peer-to-peer computer networks, comprising providing a plurality of screen saver programs, distributed between a plurality of terminal devices, said screen
20 saver programs being arranged to emulate peer-to-peer user computer programs.

14. A method of reducing piracy of digital files via peer-to-peer computer networks, comprising offering pirated files for download by peer-to-peer users; initially downloading said files at a first data rate; waiting for a period sufficiently long to cause acceptance of the download by the peer-to-peer network; and then reducing the data rate to a second, slower, data rate.

15. A method of reducing piracy of digital files via peer-to-peer computer networks, comprising offering a segment of a pirated file for download by a peer-to-peer user; and downloading data which does not correspond to said pirated file to the user so as to corrupt said pirate file.

16. A server computer for use in the system of any claims 1-12.

17. A terminal device for use in the system of any claims 1-12.

18. A computer program for causing a general purpose computer to perform as a server computer according to claim 16 or a terminal device according to claim 17.